

Centre for Future Defence and National Security

Research and education to enhance the Australian Defence Force's contribution to national security

How our work enhances Australia's national security

Through integrated research and learning programs, the Centre for Future Defence and National Security (the Centre) aims to enhance the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) contribution to Australia's national security. We align our research with the strategic priorities of the Australian War College (AWC) and the ADF more broadly. This allows us to explore strategic challenges facing Australia, and the development of the ADF to meet these challenges.

Beyond research, we support the sector's future leaders through innovative, evidence-backed learning programs delivered in partnership with the AWC.

Our research areas

Our work informs defence education and policy on a national scale, allowing us to enhance Australia's preparedness in the face of evolving security risks. We conduct critical research of national significance through four research domains.

National security and Australia's strategic environment

We explore how Australia's strategic environment will evolve and how it can respond through diverse forms of national power.

Strategy, operational art and the evolving character of war

We examine how the character of war changes over time. We analyse past and present experiences to help militaries understand and adapt.

Professional military education and wargaming

By developing innovative assessments, simulations and wargames, we focus on how professional military education can meet the intellectual challenges facing Australia's military.

Ethics, competition and war

We investigate how ethical principles and norms can be applied to competition, conflict and war in the coming decades.

The Centre ensures that Australia's defence forces have access to experts who are at the leading edge of their respective fields.

Professor Michael Rainsborough
Director, Centre for Future Defence and National Security

Our leadership team

Our research and education programs are led by an interdisciplinary team with decades of combined expertise across a range of military, political and human rights issues.

Professor Michael Rainsborough is the Director of the Centre. He is a widely published academic whose research interests focus on applying strategic theory to a broad range of military and political issues. His primary interest is in the strategies of violent non-state actors. Michael's work feeds directly into course syllabi at the AWC, helping students foster an appreciation of strategic thought principles and practice.

Associate Professor Michael Hatherell is the Deputy Director of the Centre and the Head of Teaching and Learning. He has extensive experience delivering postgraduate courses for defence and government practitioners. His research focuses on the nature of political and strategic competition, especially the role of ideas, information and perception in strategy. He is a specialist in Indonesian politics and foreign policy.

Associate Professor Pichamon Yeophantong is Head of Research and Associate Professor at the Centre. She also leads the Responsible Business Lab and the Environmental Justice and Human Rights Project. In 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed Pichamon as an independent expert, serving as the Asia-Pacific States Member on the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

Helen Andrew is the Centre's Manager and Contract Manager. Helen's 20+ years of experience in education helps shape the Centre's strategy, policy and governance. Helen's passion is building intercultural competence. Her research fosters mutual understanding, encouraging self-reflection and self-awareness, and provides opportunities for staff to build knowledge and skills to operate in culturally diverse environments.

Our research team

The Centre brings together experts from diverse disciplines, including strategic studies, military history, war studies, international relations and political science.

Associate Professor Ahmed Hashim conducts research on future war and emerging disruptive technologies. He's a teacher of insurgency, asymmetric operations and future war at the AWC, with a focus on high-intensity warfare and new technologies.

Dr Rob Engen develops bespoke wargames for the AWC's professional military education stream. His research centres on the human elements of warfare, including combat motivation, military effectiveness and soldier behaviour in the two World Wars.

Dr Michael Finch is a war and strategy historian and teacher. His research includes the history of strategy and military thought, the intellectual history of the study of war and irregular warfare.

Dr Jules Gaspard conducts research on intelligence, science and technology, and how these fields interact within American history, politics and philosophy. He also explores knowledge development and production technologies within the United States.

Dr Jade Guan examines the connection between China's foreign policy and domestic politics, plus strategic thinking on regional security and soft power. She also studies strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific region.

Dr Claire Yorke conducts research that examines how empathy and emotions can shape strategy and policy, and transform how we think about security, leadership and politics.

Dr Liam Kane researches Australian and US military history and civil-military relations in 1930s and 1950s Australia. He informs course content on alliance formation and management, logistics and economic planning, and military operations conduct.

Ms Karine Pontbriand has a research background in US-China tech relations, cyber governance and the transformation of the defence and security sectors.

Dr Emily Tanneck is a researcher in international relations and intellectual history, with a central interest in how the legitimacy of war is debated over time. She supports students to explore the ethics of war in their research.

Dr Adriano Tedde conducts research on neoliberalism, political theory, American studies, European politics and literature. His primary focus relates to statecraft, state legitimacy and social justice.

Dr Shannon Zimmerman has a research focus on peacekeeping operations and the role of gender in countering terrorism. Her work informs defence planning, addressing gaps in terrorism expertise to enhance national security.

Our professional team

The Centre achieves its strategic objectives through the management and administrative expertise of our professional team.

- Bel Corujo, Programs Coordinator
- Ken Hauritz, Contracts Coordinator
- Forrest Francis, Senior Officer, Learning Technology
- Belinda Aisbett, Senior Administrative Officer
- Srijan Niroula, Officer, Learning Technology Support
- Chevaan Aroun, Contracts Administrator
- Julie Davies, Programs Administrator

Our partnerships

In 2023, Deakin became the sole Australian university to provide academic services to the [Australian War College](#). Through this partnership, we deliver several courses to support the professional development of senior Australian military officers, public servants and regional partners. We also drive a research program aligned with the ADF's strategic research interests.

Contact us

Stay in touch to hear more about our news, research program and more. Have a question? Get in touch with the team.

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